**National Lottery Community Fund submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on domestic abuse services**

**August 2019**

Key messages

1. We agree with the government’s overall ambition to ensure adequate provision of refuge services for survivors of domestic abuse in all local authorities, by legislating as proposed in the consultation. We believe the information presented here will be useful to government in producing its guidance on domestic abuse services and to local authorities in developing their strategies to support victims of domestic abuse.
2. In order for the proposed legislation to be effective and impactful:
	1. The accommodation services provided **must be** **specialist** in nature and tailored according to the gender, ethnicity, age and immigration status of the survivor, as well as the form of violence or abuse experienced. Our learning shows that attempting to provide a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective.
		1. Women-only spaces and services are vital for effective interventions
		2. Young women need tailored services
		3. BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) women need specialist services with staff who understand their culture and specific needs.
	2. **Co-production** of services with survivors can help to ensure that the service is effective, **improves engagement** with services and **empowers** women and girls.
	3. The accommodation services **must provide** **holistic, long-term** **support** for survivors. Women accessing WGI services often are experiencing a number of complex issues. Simply providing safe accommodation is not enough and will end up costing more money unless additional support is also provided to overcome barriers (such as understanding their rights, getting legal aid, mental health support, or language support).
	4. Service providers must prioritise and invest in the **wellbeing of frontline staff**. Failing to do so will inevitably lead to sub-par service delivery, as staff burn out and leave the sector.
	5. **Effective partnerships** enable mainstream and sector-wide systems change. We partner with other organisations because we know that many of our most intractable social problems will only be solved in partnership. Our experience funding partnership working has allowed us to identify key elements of successful partnerships, in which organisations are partners in **production**, **thought** and **purpose**.
	6. The government’s proposed approach relies upon partnership working and collaboration between voluntary and community sector organisations, which will not occur in an environment where organisations are competing with each other for limited funding streams on a project-by-project basis. The solution is **that commissioners must provide long-term financial support for partnering VCS organisations that covers core funding costs**, so that these organisations can become more stable. This will enable collaboration and effective partnership working, rather than competition.

Introduction

1. The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK – we are proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
2. Every year we distribute over £600 million to communities across the UK, making circa 11,000 grants. This includes funding for VCS organisations to support survivors of domestic abuse in various ways, including providing refuge accommodation, support through independent domestic violence advisors, counselling, and practical support.
3. Our most significant investment in this area is our £48.5 million Women and Girls Initiative (WGI). Through this programme 62 projects across England received between £150,000 and £750,000 for up to five years (2016-2021) to help and empower women and girls facing a wide range of issues such as abuse, violence, exploitation, homelessness, addiction, unemployment and involvement with the criminal justice system. 22 of the projects are working with survivors of domestic abuse.
4. While the short-term impact of the WGI is to build on and strengthen the work that is already being delivered by the women and girls sector, the Fund wanted to ensure that this initiative would have a long term impact on the sector beyond investing in the delivery of services. Therefore, the long-term aim of the WGI is to share high quality learning from the projects to inform future delivery of services for women and girls. It is under this objective that we are responding to this consultation, based on anecdotal and emerging findings which have been gleaned from individual project reports, as well as interviews with some of the WGI projects.
5. Formal evaluation of each of the WGI projects is currently underway and the results will be published in 2020, which we will share with government. The evaluation will be carried out by Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR), DMSS Research (DMSS) and the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU).

Key messages in more detail

1. **The importance of specialist support for domestic abuse survivors**
2. It is well-evidenced and acknowledged that domestic abuse is a gendered crime, which impacts women more severely than men,[[1]](#endnote-1) and that therefore requires **a gender-informed, tailored response, based on evidence of what works**.
3. Generic large-scale services can be detrimental and ineffective, because each group requires specialised support. By trying to provide for everyone, services can end up providing no one with the support they need.
4. The WGI has shown that diverse and specialist interventions are essential if the sector wants to successfully tackle all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). While VAWG services are in themselves specialist, many have focused their activity even further to effectively support women and girls. Services are most effective when specialised according to the gender, age, ethnicity and migrant status of the survivor, as well as consideration of the type of violence or abuse experienced.
5. The WGI came about as a result of feedback from participants of the Fund’s “Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs” programme. Their feedback highlighted that 10 of the 12 partnerships that were delivering the programme had struggled to adequately meet the needs of women accessing their support.[[2]](#endnote-2) This was due to a lack of women-centred approaches and women-only spaces.
6. TNLCF has funded projects which provide specialist support for the following groups:
* **Women** – There is evidence showing that women fare best when provided with support specialised for women, in an all-female environment. **Providing women-only services enables organisations to engage with women who face the most barriers to receiving support**. Women-only services are not a luxury; they are vital for making support accessible and effective.
	+ Legally requiring ‘safe accommodation’ may not be sufficient, e.g. if it is a hostel with male inhabitants.
	+ Women-only spaces can also make services more accessible to women from particular cultures, e.g. in the case of the Maya Project, who have realised that women in the Muslim community wouldn’t attend a class if men were present.
	+ It can also ensure marginalised women don’t fall through the gaps, e.g. The Nelson Trust found that women involved in sex work were not accessing a newly commissioned local Drug and Alcohol service, due to the shame and stigma attached. They are now delivering a Drug and Alcohol service at the Trust’s women-only centre, enabling women to benefit from this service in a safe and comfortable space.
* **Young women** – Young women have been observed not staying long at refuges, or not progressing in their recovery, where support is not tailored for young women specifically.
	+ The WGI programme works with women across all age groups, with **16 projects primarily supporting young women and girls**, whose ages range from 11 to 25. In general, young women and girls have higher support needs than older women.
	+ E.g. Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid young women’s refuge has developed a specialist young women’s refuge after finding that young women were not engaging well with their generic refuge services.
	+ Our learning for young women:
		- **Clear professional boundaries** are essential when providing high levels of support.
		- **Dialogue, not dictation.** It’s important not to tell the women accessing these services what to do. Instead, talk about the potential consequences and any alternative options together. This encourages them to take responsibility for their decisions.
		- **Building trust takes time; patience and persistence is key.** Because it takes longer to build trust with young women, it is important that there is no deadline for recovery. Furthermore, when regular or intensive support is no longer needed, light touch, follow-up support ensures that there is no “cliff edge” to support.
		- **Bringing creativity to services and activities not only improves young women’s engagement, it can also help them to explore their own interests and talents.** Developing a sense of identity based on what they enjoy and what they are good at helps to build confidence and self-esteem. Projects have also found that using a creative activity to discuss difficult topics can be very effective.
		- **Engagement must be voluntarily to build trust from the very beginning.** One challenge that WGI services are facing is referral of young women to their services by other professionals without the individual’s knowledge or consent. In these cases, they are reluctant to engage with the service. To prevent this, A Way Out now refuses to take non-consensual referrals, and the referring agency are encouraged to bring the young woman to the project to look around and discuss what support could be offered, so she can decide for herself whether she wants to participate.
		- **Having a safe and comfortable environment in which to meet and support young women and girls also helps to improve engagement.** The [VIBE](http://www.togetherwomen.org/vibe) project did this by involving young women in the design of their venues.
		- **Organisations have also had to think about the accessibility and appropriateness of the spaces they use.** [Pathway Project](https://www.pathway-project.co.uk/) meet young women in a school or another neutral venue, rather than at their home, to help them feel safe and free to talk about anything happening at home. [VIBE](http://www.togetherwomen.org/vibe) noticed that attendance dropped during the winter, as the girls or their parents thought it was unsafe for them to travel into the city centre after dark. They have now reviewed their winter opening hours, and maximised what is on offer during school holidays and weekends.
* **BAME women and girls** – This requires understanding of culture and in some cases honour-based abuse. Women and girls from minority cultures and backgrounds face specific barriers to receiving appropriate support.
	+ **Ten of the WGI projects focus on supporting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women specifically**. Some of the organisations work with all BAME women, while others work with specific communities.
	+ WGI services are providing culturally sensitive services that recognise and understand the types of abuse they may be affected by, such as “honour-based” abuse and harmful traditional practices such as FGM and forced marriage.
	+ **Not having to explain themselves and the cultural nuances that shape their experiences is important to women.** Services need frontline workers who are experienced in, or have been trained for, working with women affected by these forms of abuse. This provides them with the knowledge and understanding of the cultural distinctions and practices that lead to certain forms of abuse and the appropriate forms of support each woman will need.
	+ WGI services have found that the trust they have built with different communities over the years have been key to their success with working with BAME women. They have built a reputation within the community that enables them to reach out to more women, change attitudes and challenge stigma, develop new referral routes, and also improve the communities’ trust in and access to mainstream services.
	+ **Hiring or training multilingual** staff is also important to break down barriers to BAMER women accessing support. This is particularly important for women who may be experiencing abuse; relying on a family member to translate is not an option, as they may be involved in any abuse being committed.
* **Migrants** and those with unstable immigration status – Many projects are supporting **refugee, asylum seeking and migrant women.**
	+ Legal Support: WGI-funded charities are seeing more and more cases of vulnerable women with unstable immigration status access their services. This includes women who are in the UK on a spousal or partner visa and experiencing domestic abuse, women who have been trafficked for exploitation, or isolated women who are going through the asylum seeking process, with only the very basics of financial support available to them.
	+ WGI services have found that when supporting women with unstable immigration status, **providing legal expertise is crucial**. Having no access to free legal advice and representation to resolve immigration issues is one of the main drivers of destitution.
	+ E.g. organisations such as Hibiscus (who support foreign, Black, Asian and ethnic minority, refugee and migrant women affected by the criminal justice system) or the Snowdrop Project (who work with trafficking survivors) both have legal experts within their charities to provide case work in-house.
	+ Activities for migrant women: While providing practical support such as legal casework, it’s important to engage women in other developmental activities alongside this. Immigration and legal cases can take months or even years to be resolved, and engaging women in activities helps improve their wellbeing, build networks, reduce isolation and cultivate useful skills.
1. It is important to recognise that different interventions are also necessary for other forms of violence and abuse (other than domestic abuse):
* **Survivors of human trafficking** – Although there are a number of WGI projects which support women who have experienced sexual exploitation and/or are involved in sex work, each service is specialised. Women who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation, women who engage in survival or street sex work, and young women and girls who have experienced child sexual exploitation, have very different experiences and circumstances, and will all need different forms of support.
	+ - * + **Outreach is one key element of this.** For example, [Rahab](http://www.rahabuk.com/) are a frontline charity based in West London which works to identify and support survivors of human trafficking. Because sex trafficking happens off the street - in residential accommodation, massage parlours and sometimes hotels - Rahab work with the local borough police to identify premises where it may be taking place. Rahab’s frontline workers and volunteers then carefully make contact with women through a welfare visit, to start a relationship with them and offer them any support they might need.
* **Women engaged in street sex work** – This requires a different approach to trafficking e.g. One25 reach women engaged in street sex-work through their van outreach service, which meets women at night on the streets as a ‘drop-in’ service.
* **Survivors of stalking** – Stalking requires specialist risk assessment due to the long term and deceptively disjointed nature of the abuse.
	+ - * + E.g. [Changing Pathways](https://changingpathways.org/) applied for funding from the WGI for their stalking advocacy project, as they saw a huge gap in domestic abuse services for stalking and harassment victims, as well as a lack of understanding of this form of abuse within statutory and non-statutory services. Having specialised risk assessment within the service has helped Changing Pathways to provide stalking survivors with the right support and advocacy with other agencies, and has also helped women to log incidents of abuse.
1. **Co-production of services with survivors can help to ensure that the service is** **effective.**
2. One of the key benefits of co-production is that it helps the project to **effectively meet the needs** of those they are supporting. People with lived experience are in the best position to understand the challenges and identify solutions. This has been illustrated throughout the WGI.
3. Each WGI project makes sure that the women and girls they work with are involved in the project through various means, be that through feedback, consultations, peer support groups, service delivery or service design. Co-production is important in high level, strategic planning and day-to-day, practical considerations of service delivery.
	* E.g. in their WGI partnership project, [Women’s Aid](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/) and [SafeLives](http://www.safelives.org.uk) wanted women and girls with lived experience to be involved throughout the design of the project to ensure that they were getting it right. Survivors and “expert partners” - frontline staff who are experts in a topic - have grounded the project at every stage of the development, by keeping it relevant to the experiences of survivors and frontline workers.
	* E.g. Community-based charity One Voice for Travellers works with women and girls experiencing domestic abuse from the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Community. For One Voice, co-production has been vital for keeping their service fit for purpose; their steering group, made up of members from the community, have frequently spotted practical considerations that professionals had missed. This input has been integral to delivering the project smoothly and better supporting women and girls.
4. Co-production **improves engagement** with services.
	* Involving women and girls in the design and delivery of a service gives them a sense of ownership over the project. This encourages women and girls to engage with services, and also helps to make the project a safe space in which they can be open about the issues they are facing, which ultimately makes the service more effective.
	* This is illustrated by Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid’s (BSWA) young women’s refuge, Seerose, one of only two refuges specifically for women and girls between the ages of 16 and 25 in the UK. BSWA only opened Seerose after consulting with young women who were not using BSWA’s generic refuges and discovering that many felt “it wasn’t a place for them”. [[3]](#endnote-3) After finding out what these young women needed, Seerose was developed. Every aspect of the refuge was influenced by these young women, and they are continuously consulted on how the refuge is run, which BSWA believe gives them a sense of belonging. One of the residents commented, “I went home to visit my family. When I was there I realised it wasn’t home anymore and I said to my family I’m going home (to the refuge). This is my home…”
5. Co-production **empowers** women and girls and has been shown to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.
	* E.g. For [Inspire Women](http://inspirewomenoldham.co.uk/), a women’s centre in Oldham, coproduction is a core component of their model. The centre’s project delivery is supported by women who have been members, a model based on the belief that women are able to come up with their own solutions by identifying and tapping into their strengths. Inspire fosters a safe environment where each woman is supported to do this.
6. **Long-term, holistic support for women**
7. Due to the complex nature of issues that women often bring to WGI services, the WGI has discovered the importance of providing accessible holistic, person-centred interventions, to ensure women are safe and secure. A holistic intervention is one which looks at the whole person and their circumstances, rather than focussing on one issue. The WGI therefore does not simply deal with the presenting problem that a woman may bring to them, but over time also pick up on any other difficulties that they would benefit from working through.
	* For example, Latin American Women’s Aid, who work with Latin American and Spanish and Portuguese Speaking women who have experienced domestic abuse, offer a wide range of services alongside initial crisis support. This includes help with accessing welfare benefits, legal support relating to immigration status, employability workshops, specialist child counselling and family relationship building workshops, amongst other services.
8. Long-term support is particularly important for young women survivors of VAWG, as it takes so long to build up trust.
9. The importance of factoring in long-term service costs into initial budgeting/planning/commissioning for service delivery.
	* The nature of Domestic Abuse and Stalking is that they are long-term forms of abuse that often continue for a number of years and can result in complex trauma for the survivor. The long-term support that survivors often need has been a challenge for VCS organisations, as the services simply don’t have the resources to continue providing case work for some women, **without denying access to the service for others**. The solution is to factor long-term support costs into the commissioning of projects.
10. As each of the organisations involved in the WGI work holistically, **their work cuts across multiple themes and supports women with diverse experiences**, including:
	* Survivors of domestic abuse
		+ 22 projects are working with survivors of domestic abuse. Services include refuge accommodation, support through independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA), counselling, and practical support.
	* Women who have experienced, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation
		+ 8 projects are supporting women who have experienced, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation. Including survivors of trafficking, child sexual exploitation, or women involved in street sex work.
	* Women who have experienced or are at risk of sexual violence
		+ 3 projects are working with women who have experienced or are at risk of sexual violence. They are doing this through crisis and therapeutic support, online support platforms, and working in partnership with the police to improve the response for survivors.
	* Women who have been involved in the Criminal Justice system
		+ Six projects are supporting women who have been involved in the Criminal Justice system. This includes supporting mothers in prison, support for women with mental health issues or substance and alcohol misuse issues who are or have been in prison, and women dealing with legal challenges because of their immigration status.
		+ E.g. [The Greater Manchester Women's Support Alliance (GWSA)](https://gmwsa.org.uk/) identified a gap in the support provided to women whilst in custody, with support available from women’s services once they are released from prison. To close this gap, GSWA have introduced a Prison Link Worker at Styal prison to support women as they move “through the gate”- from the prison into the community- referring them to the appropriate local women’s services. Women have said that link workers have provided a streamlined and supportive “through the gate” service which previously felt very much like a “to the gate” service. This has led to 215 women being referred to local women’s centres, giving them access to vital support immediately on release.
	* Women needing support into education and employment
		+ Eight projects are helping women into education and employment. These projects are giving women the opportunity to learn new skills such as maths, English, and IT, as well as providing access to mentors and adult education.
		+ E.g. Hillcroft College is a women’s college in South West London that helps women who are furthest from education to engage in learning. They deliver courses to women who did not complete their education or who achieved low educational attainment and want to improve their job opportunities, gain confidence, and improve their life prospects. Their WGI project, Beyond Education 2020, is supporting women who experience multiple barriers to learning, such as domestic abuse, undiagnosed learning disabilities, poor mental health, and caring responsibilities. They engage and support them by providing taster classes and tours, to improve their confidence and make them feel more comfortable with being in an educational space. Once engaged, women can access residential study opportunities, wellbeing workshops and a range of support services (mental health, housing, debt, alcohol and drug problems) to help them in their studies and to tackle some of the barriers they face to improving their lives. In year one and two of the Beyond Education 2020 project, over 660 women have participated in Hillcroft courses and activities.
	* Women and girls needing mental health support, particularly those who have been through traumatic experiences
		+ E.g. [Room to Talk](http://www.roomtotalkcic.co.uk/home.html) works with women in Styal prison, to reduce harmful behaviours such as self-harm and suicidal ideation, through one to one counselling sessions and an eight-week group therapy programme, called FIRST. In its first two years, Room to Talk have provided counselling to 185 women, and have delivered 18 FIRST groups, with an average of eight women participating per group. Although they currently don’t have figures, anecdotally they are seeing a reduction of self-harm and problematic behaviour, and women are seeing a significant improvement to their self-worth and hope for a more positive future.

**d. Invest in staff wellbeing**

1. Service providers must prioritise and invest in the **wellbeing of frontline staff**. Failing to do so will inevitably lead to sub-par service delivery, as staff burn out and leave the sector.
2. Promoting self-care throughout the organisation is an important strategy against staff burnout. E.g. The stalking advocacy team at [Changing Pathways](https://changingpathways.org/community-services/independent-stalking-advocacy-team/) have found it useful to frame self-care as part of the wider goal of ending violence against women and girls: if you want to support women and girls, you need to make sure that you are taking care of yourself.
3. Self-care will look different for each person, but WGI services are promoting small ways in which frontline workers can relieve stress and reflect on their work. These include taking a break, meditating, peer support groups at work, or talking openly to a manager or colleague after a difficult day.
4. Organisations should provide varied forms of support for staff through **regular supervision** with their line manager, **confidential clinical supervision** where they talk about their own emotional wellbeing, and **group sessions** with colleagues where they can share their experiences and feel the support from their peers.
5. **Effective partnerships enable wider systems change**
6. The National Lottery Community Fund itself works in partnership and supports other organisations to work together because we know that many of our most intractable social problems will only be solved in partnership.
7. Our partnerships funding programme makes grants of over £10,000 for up to five years for organisations that share responsibility and influence with others, have a shared set of goals and values, and achieve their mission by starting with the bigger picture rather than just what their organisation can do on its own. We call this ‘generous leadership’. Generous leadership in partnerships involves putting mission over organisation, putting collaboration over competition and, often, letting go of power.
8. Our funding supports many different types of partnership including cross-sector, local place-based collaboration or local and national organisations working together around a particular theme.
9. Our experience of funding partnership working through this programme and others has allowed us to identify key elements of successful partnerships, in which organisations are partners in production, thought and purpose.
	* **Partners in production:** Organisations share their assets to save costs and to build their collective capacity. In a generous leadership context this means helping other organisations to become better at what they do and looking at longer term sustainability of the group as a whole as opposed to just individual organisations.
	* **Partners in thought:** Partnerships are communities in their own right. The roles and functions of the parties involved are important constituents of partnerships. Internal resources and relations should be considered as key factors for success and for maximising the knowledge brought to bear by the partnership. If clarity is achieved in relation to roles and responsibilities, the desired outcomes of the partnerships are more likely to be achieved. In order to understand what one organisation could offer to others — or may want to look for in a thought partner — requires first understanding their own thinking and areas of expertise. Partnerships should therefore put more effort into achieving both an ‘outward’ and an ‘inward focus’ with the aim of developing further alliances through a strong, robust and collaborative partnership base. A thought partner is also an organisation that: challenges another organisation’s thinking; causes the other organisation to modify or change its paradigms, assumptions or actions; has information or a way of thinking that provokes another organisation to innovate or otherwise leads to value creation in that organisation.
	* **Partners in purpose:** Founded in mutual benefit and shared goals, a partnership of purpose features a number of organisations working toward a shared set objective (to end domestic violence for instance). These partnerships are common throughout the voluntary and community sector, and without thought partnership can result in focus more on the overall aim of the partnership and less on how robust its constituent parts are. This reduces the opportunity for culture change within the organisations involved, in turn resulting in fewer opportunities for wider systems change and sustainability.
10. We have also identified some practical tips for effective partnership working:
	* Discuss, precisely define and jointly decide on the roles and functions of each partner;
	* Reflect on roles and functions regularly;
	* Clarify the obligations, responsibilities and restrictions on capacity of each partner;
	* Balance interests and contributions carefully;
	* Make best use of the strengths of partners;
	* Establish a strong management structure;
	* Ensure funding for partnership co-ordination.
11. There are 15 partnerships within the WGI, many of which were formed as a way to **pool resources and expertise across one locality**, so that they could have a **wider reach and a bigger impact**.
	* E.g.[The Maya Project](http://saheli.org.uk/maya-project/) is delivered by a combination of eight small and large organisations, which aim to support and empower black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women and girls throughout Manchester. The WGI partnership has enabled them to combine their specialisms and experience, either through their strong links with the communities they work with, or their specialist expertise, e.g. working with women experiencing domestic violence, supporting carers and their families, or providing learning and employment opportunities. Collectively, the Maya Project delivers 32 services a week across the city (from refuges to volunteering, one-to-one support and skills development), supporting over 2000 women in its first year alone. This achievement would not have been possible without the WGI partnership.
	* E.g. The Greater Manchester Women’s Support Alliance (GMWSA), is a partnership of nine women’s organisations delivering a ‘Whole System Approach’ to supporting women in contact with the criminal justice system, or at risk of offending. Through effective collaboration with agencies such as the Police, National Probation Service, and Styal prison, women are referred to specialist women’s services at every stage of contact they may have with the criminal justice system- from point of arrest to release from custody. At this stage in the project, the Whole System Approach is showing signs of impact; the reoffending rate for Greater Manchester is now 11% lower than other metropolitan areas. Furthermore, Styal prison have now employed two of their own Prison Link Workers inspired by the success of those introduced by GMWSA.
12. **Long-term financial support is needed for VCS organisations**
13. The government’s proposed approach relies upon partnership working and collaboration between VCS organisations, which may not occur in an environment where organisations are competing with each other for limited funding streams on a project-by-project basis. Competition in the women’s sector for limited funding streams is high; this undermines partnership, impacts on positive working relationships and capacity for innovation, resulting in an overstretched sector. This is made more prominent as most organisations within the domestic abuse sector use either needs led, or a risk-based approach. In the current funding climate, this is hindering the ability of the sector to determine the most effective way to meet the needs of women and girls.
14. Through the WGI, Women’s Aid and SafeLives, the UK’s leading national domestic abuse charities, have been able to come together in partnership to pilot and test different interventions in five locations, to determine the most effective way of identifying domestic abuse earlier and aiding longer term recovery.
	* Women’s Aid and SafeLives recognised that as two of the key players within the sector advocating different approaches to the same audience, they have been part of the problem: the sector has been divided by a lack of clarity.
	* The WGI partnership has enabled them to focus on what they have in common, which gives a clearer message to the sector.
	* Feedback from member organisations is already showing that it is now easier for people on the ground to deliver services without these mixed messages.
	* Two years into the project, they have now designed the model of delivery alongside survivors and frontline practitioners, and are delivering this model in Norfolk, West Sussex, Northumbria, Surrey, and Nottinghamshire. Each site is now working closely with local authorities, agencies and services, to test and develop a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse.
	* Importantly, this partnership would not have been possible without the long-term, stable funding provided by WGI.
15. The solution is **that commissioners must provide long-term financial support for partnering VCS organisations that covers core funding costs**, so that these organisations can become more stable. This will enable collaboration and effective partnership working, rather than competition.

Further information

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1. Women’s Aid, <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-is-a-gendered-crime/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Women and girl’s initiative: Lines to take, Internal communications document [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Tanya Edwards, Refuge Manager, Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid. 16th October 2018. Face to face interview. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)